

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes of October 14, 2014**

- I. **ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair John Quinn III, Selectmen Kevin T. Beal, Brad Denny, Dennis Donahue, Lynn Doney, Matthew Gadbois, Kenneth W. Goslant, K. David Maxwell, and James R. Wilson. Also present were Town Manager Jeffrey Schulz, Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Police Chief James Dziobek, Donald Wallace, Josh Jennings, Jill Donahue, and Kathleen Lott (*Northfield News*).

Prior to the regular meeting, the Town Select Board held a Public Hearing beginning at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of providing written or oral views on proposed Town Ordinance 2014-1, also known as the Town Traffic Ordinance 2014. This proposed ordinance would combine into one document the traffic ordinances for the Town of Northfield and for the Village of Northfield prior to municipal merger. The only substantive change is the weekday two-hour parking restrictions on Depot Square would be expanded to include not only the storefront parking spaces on its north and west sides but also the spaces on the north, west, and south sides of the interior common. The parking spaces on the south side of Depot Square/Wall Street would not be affected.

Chair Quinn asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the proposed ordinance. Donald Wallace believes that the number of handicapped spaces situated on Depot Square is inadequate. He believes that there should be at least one additional handicapped space on the north side of Depot Square. This would supplement the one in front of the Northfield Pharmacy and the one by the American Legion. He added that the handicapped space located at the extreme southeast corner of Depot Square does not appear to have any practical purpose as there are no nearby businesses. Jill Donahue (Northfield Pharmacy) agreed with Mr. Wallace that additional handicapped parking was needed. She also felt that the handicapped space in front of her business should be realigned to make it more useful. Selectman Goslant believes that when Depot Square underwent its recent rehabilitation, the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) informed Northfield that there was sufficient handicapped parking in the area. Mr. Wallace still believes that there should at least be an additional handicapped space between the current ones on the north side. It was pointed out that the proposed ordinance does not regulate the placement of handicapped parking spaces on Depot Square or anywhere else in Northfield. The Select Board can discuss and make these determinations at any time.

There being no other questions or comments, the Public Hearing closed at 7:15 p.m. The regular meeting then began immediately.

- II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** The Board members and the public were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.
- III. **SET/ADJUST AGENDA.** Manager Schulz stated that he learned today that a special warrant (Warrant #08-15A) needs to be put on the agenda. This warrant is related to the Current Expense Note to be approved later in the meeting. Also, Jamie DeMasi had asked to be put on the agenda in order to address a traffic matter but he is not present tonight.
- IV. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED):** None.
- V. **DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT**

- a. **Police Chief James Dziobek.** Chief Dziobek distributed a written report to the Select Board members at this time. There are six (6) sections in the report ("Department Staffing," Noise Complaints," "[Part-time] Detective," "Geographic Cruiser Locations," "Cruiser Graphics," and "Fair and Impartial Policing") and he discussed each of these in turn. He noted that the Northfield Police Department (NPD) now has a 24/7 schedule and there is at least one NPD officer on duty at all times. Chair Quinn saw under the staff list that one NPD officer currently is at the Policy Academy. He was unaware that an additional officer would be attending the academy this year and asked if this would cause the NPD budget to "go into the red." Chief Dziobek stated that the officer attending the academy would be filling the vacancy caused by the unexpected resignation of a full-time officer. He added that he was not sure how the new 24/7 work schedule would impact NPD personnel expenses this fiscal year. Selectman Gadbois had assumed that there would be some savings since overtime expenses have been largely eliminated. Chief Dziobek assumes that this will be the case but he has no way of predicting the exact costs at this time. He added that he has been working very closely with Finance Director Laurie Baroffio to keep track of this. Chair Quinn noted that even though overtime expenses have gone down, it seems that part-time officer expenses have gone up over the same period. He and Selectman Donahue will be meeting with Manager Schulz tomorrow to discuss budget numbers.

Selectman Goslant believes that Northfield spends far too much money sending young and inexperienced officers to the Police Academy. He would rather that NPD try to hire already qualified officers to fill vacancies even if that means paying them more. Chief Dziobek stated that it is difficult for smaller police departments to attract experienced officers. He knows of some that would like to work for NPD but are reluctant to start off with a five dollar (\$5) per hour pay cut. Selectman Goslant thought that Northfield has a larger police force than comparable Vermont college towns (i.e., Lyndonville, Castleton, Randolph, etc.). Chief Dziobek stated that each community decides for itself the level of policing it would like. Northfield could have a smaller police department but that would mean that it would become more reactive than pro-active regarding crime control issues. This also would make it much more difficult to retain experienced officers as most prefer to serve in departments that are more active in the community. Selectman Goslant noted the turnover in NPD officers over the past few years and asked why this was so. Chief Dziobek stated that experienced officers throughout the state often are drawn to larger departments where there is more opportunity for higher pay and advancement. He added that many smaller Vermont towns seem to have become over-reliant on part-time police officers for staffing and this may cause real problems when new state regulations regarding part-time officer certification go into effect.

Selectman Denny believes that since each Vermont town has distinct features, it is difficult to make direct comparisons regarding police staffing levels. For example, those towns that have Vermont State Police barracks in or near their communities such as Waterbury, Randolph, and Lyndonville appear to rely heavily on Vermont State Police to provide police coverage. This type of "free" police coverage does not cost the affected community anything extra as this expense is shared by all Vermont taxpayers, even those already paying for their own local police departments. Due to its limited tax base, Northfield cannot realistically compete for experienced police officers. However, based on what this community can afford, Selectman Denny believes that the NPD does a very good job and he is proud to live in a community with such a competent and pro-active police force.

Regarding noise complaints, Chief Dziobek stated that this remains an ongoing concern. He has been trying to find solutions by working not only with the complainants but also the probable sources of these problems. He felt that it was very important that these complaints be handled very carefully in order to prevent small incidents from blowing up into major problems. He is confident that his officers have both the training and the aptitude to handle them properly.

Chief Dziobek stated that the part-time detective (Charles Satterfield) has devoted many hours to a recent death investigation (that closed today) so he may need to juggle his schedule in order to address remaining open investigations. One of the reasons for creating this position was to free the other NPD officers from engaging in similar time-consuming crime investigations so that they are available for patrol duty. He feels that this goal has been achieved.

Chief Dziobek then addressed a couple of recent issues regarding the NPD cruiser fleet. He stated that residents sometimes see a NPD cruiser in another community and wonder why that is the case. He then listed the number of reasons why that might occur including transporting prisoners to lockup facilities; taking NPD officers to court hearings, training sessions, etc.; and providing backup coverage for a neighboring community. If a resident can provide the date, time, and location, Chief Dziobek or his staff would be happy to explain why the NPD cruiser was operating outside of Northfield. As to the new high-visibility graphics put on some of the NPD fleet, Chief Dziobek noted that nationwide more police officers are killed in traffic incidents than from any other single cause. This often involves officers struck by other vehicles while conducting traffic stops on the side of the road. Although there are no federal standards for police vehicle visibility, Chief Dziobek stated that standards were developed and enforced in the United Kingdom that resulted in reduced traffic-related fatalities. He concluded by saying even though such a change might be upsetting to some people, his "bottom line" consideration is the safety of his officers and the community.

Lastly, Chief Dziobek addressed the "Fair and Impartial Policing" standards that the State of Vermont required each police department to adopt last month. Each department now is required to log each traffic stop, note the reason for each stop, the race/ethnicity of the person stopped, and the result of that stop (i.e. whether a warning or citation was issued, etc.). Chief Dziobek added that there now are very specific guidelines on what a police officer can and cannot do during a traffic stop. These logs are compiled and the information is available for public review.

Chair Quinn and the other Board members thanked Chief Dziobek for his informative report. He was asked to return later in order to participate in an executive session discussion (see below).

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **September 23, 2014 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Selectman Donahue, seconded by Selectman Beal, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 8-0-1, with Selectman Goslant abstaining.**

VII. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Warrant #08-15.** Motion by Selectman Donahue, seconded by Selectman Beal, to approve Warrant #08-15 in the amount of \$552,755.31. Both Chair Quinn and Selectman Goslant expressed concern regarding various legal expenses. Manager Schulz confirmed that he is keeping close track of these matters. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**
- b. **Warrant #08-15A.** Motion by Selectman Donahue, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve Warrant #08-15A in the amount of \$23,629.74. Manager Schulz stated that this warrant covers the refinancing of the bank note that was taken out after Tropical Storm Irene in order to repair damages to the flooded wellfield. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**
- c. **Bi-Weekly Payroll through September 28, 2014.** Motion by Selectman Gadbois, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve the bi-weekly payroll in the amount of \$82,937.05. Selectman Wilson stated that he does not feel comfortable bringing personnel expenses into a public forum. He believes that the Town Manager should be responsible for overseeing these expenses and he opposes this level of micro-managing. Selectman Denny noted that it is the Select Board's responsibility to approve payroll expenses. Selectman Beal agrees somewhat with Selectman Wilson on this matter and added that the Select Board does approve overall payroll expenses when the warrant is approved. He asked Manager Schulz if it were standard practice in the Vermont towns he has worked in for the legislative body to approve a separate breakdown of personnel expenses. Manager Schulz stated that some communities do it that way and some do not. The last three (3) towns he worked for did approve a separate payroll breakdown. Selectman Goslant asked why the part-time expenses for the Northfield Fire Department (NFD) were so high this payroll period. Chair Quinn stated that the annual stipend payments to NFD officers are made in early October. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**

VIII. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Bond Anticipation Note (Central/Washington Streets Water Mains).** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Donahue, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note for the replacement of the water mains on Central Street and Washington Street for the amount of \$1,250,000 at 1.14% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. Chair Quinn asked if this was to cover the expenses for the construction phase of this project. Manager Schulz confirmed that this was the case. He added that the Town would make the payments first and later be partially reimbursed by the State of Vermont. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**
- b. **Bond Anticipation Note (King Street Water Mains).** Motion by Selectman Denny, seconded by Selectman Donahue, to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Note for the replacement of the water mains on King Street for the amount of \$950,000 at 1.14% interest; to approve and sign the Bond Anticipation Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the No-Arbitrage and Use of Proceeds Certificate. Selectman Denny asked if the note would not be taken out until the construction phase of the project has begun. Manager Schulz said that was correct. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**
- c. **Current Expense Note (Disaster Recovery).** Motion by Selectman Donahue, seconded by Selectman Denny, to approve and sign the Current Expense Note for Disaster Recovery in the amount of \$45,072 at 1.14% interest; to approve and sign the Current Expense Borrowing Resolution; and to approve and sign the Current Expense Borrowing Tax Certificate. As discussed earlier, this note paid for repairs to the wellfield that had been submerged by flood waters in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**
- d. **Community Development Block Grant Agreement Resolution (New EMS Facility).** Motion by Selectman Donahue, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve and sign the Community Development Block Grant Agreement Resolution. Manager Schulz noted that the Town already has hired an architect to develop options for a revitalized EMS Facility that would be co-located with the existing Northfield Fire Station. Approving this resolution would authorize the Town Manager to execute any agreements associated with this grant award.

Manager Schulz recently met with the architect and received updated plans. Since the initial cost estimates were considered rather high, there may need to be a reevaluation. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**

- e. **Engineering Services Agreement (Central Street Storm Drain Replacement Project).** Motion by Selectman Beal, seconded by Selectman Donahue, to approve and authorize Manager Schulz to sign the agreement. Manager Schulz stated that Phelps Engineering has submitted this agreement to provide engineering services to design the replacement of storm drains along Central Street. The cost of their engineering services would be \$9,400 and Phelps Engineering has estimated the total cost of the project at \$95,400. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**
- f. **Approval of Tax Stabilization Agreement Policy.** Motion by Selectman Donahue, seconded by Selectman Maxwell, to approve and sign the Tax Stabilization Agreement Policy. This policy had been discussed in draft form at the previous Select Board regular meeting (09/23/14) and would only go into effect if Northfield voters provide the Select Board with this authority at the upcoming Special Town Meeting (see below). Selectman Beal expressed some concerns at the last meeting regarding some ADA compliance stipulations in the earlier draft; have these been revised? Manager Schulz confirmed that the language was removed. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**
- g. **Town Traffic Ordinance 2014.** As discussed earlier during the public hearing, this proposed ordinance would combine into one document the traffic ordinances that had regulated separately Town and Village streets prior to municipal merger. The only significant change is that the weekday two-hour parking restrictions would be expanded to include the spaces around the interior common. Selectman Maxwell noted that two (2) Mayo Associates employees emailed their requests to have some two-hour spaces situated in front of their building (which also houses Northfield Travel) located on the south side of Depot Square. Selectman Denny had no objection to putting three (3) restricted parking spaces at that location. Chair Quinn is concerned that this may result in too few spaces for all-day parking. He felt that two (2) spaces would be sufficient. Selectman Goslant agreed with this. Selectman Beal will rewrite the ordinance's section regarding Depot Square parking to reflect this. Unless further concerns arise, the ordinance will be approved and signed at the next regular meeting (10/28/14).
- h. **Public Hearing (Special Town Meeting).** The Select Board will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, October 28, 2014, at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of providing written or oral views on the Warned Town Article to be voted upon by Australian Ballot at the Special Town Meeting on Tuesday, November 4, 2014. If approved, the article would authorize the Select Board to "enter into tax stabilization contracts fixing and maintaining the valuation of certain grand list properties..."
- i. **Special Town Meeting (Tax Stabilization Agreement Authorization).** This Australian Ballot election will be held in the Lobby of the Northfield Middle/High School on Tuesday, November 4, 2014, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Early/absentee ballots can be obtained by contacting the Town Clerk's Office (485-5421).

IX. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **Town Buildings & Energy Committee.** Selectman Gadbois reported that the Committee has held several recent meetings in order to address significant concerns regarding the Brown Public Library and the Municipal Building. Valuable information has been obtained and plans are being generated to address these concerns. Manager Schulz added that a quote has been received from a local building contractor to repair and seal the defective Municipal Building southern wall to prevent future flooding problems. The initial quote is for \$4,100 but Selectman Gadbois believes this cost could be lowered if Town employees provide some of the labor. Selectman Denny added that Manager Schulz has been attending these meetings as the maintenance of municipal facilities is ultimately his responsibility.
- b. **Special Electric Board Commission Meeting.** Selectman Wilson, who serves as one of the Electric Board Commissioners, noted that the Electric Board Commission will hold an additional meeting next Monday night (10/20/14) at 7:00 p.m. in the training room located in the Northfield Police Station (110 Wall Street). The Joint Commission Meeting held last week (10/06/14) included a discussion of how the Northfield Electric Department's new lien authority might affect local landlords. The meeting was well attended and became quite contentious on occasion. This additional meeting will attempt to clear up any remaining confusion.

- c. **Recreation Committee.** Selectman Goslant has been attending the Committee's monthly meetings and provided a brief summary of last night's meeting. There was discussion of expanding the local trail system, perhaps including some ancient trails located in the Town Forest. There is an issue regarding playing field maintenance (mowing, etc.) and Selectman Goslant will forward this in writing to Manager Schulz in the next day or two. There also are preliminary plans to hold a "healthy" winter carnival early next year.
 - d. **Backhoe Problems.** Chair Quinn has learned that the tab on the backhoe has rotted out and needs to be replaced. He was surprised that the Select Board was not informed of this development beforehand and that the backhoe's poor condition was not brought up during the last budget sessions.
 - e. **Board Packets.** Selectman Beal would like Manager Schulz to look into the possibility of sending out electronic versions of the materials distributed in the meeting packets.
- X. **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT.** Manager Schulz had some information to supplement the report he emailed earlier to the Select Board members.
- a. **Proposed Storage Shed Addition.** Manager Schulz has been approached by Ambulance Chief Lawton Rutter and Road Foreman Ray Hudson who would like an existing storage shed by the Town Garage extended in order to provide additional covered storage space. Chair Quinn thought that some storage space was freed up when the salt shed was built by the Northfield Falls pit and the road salt was relocated there. Selectman Doney stated that the intent is to cover the Northfield Ambulance Service trailer and keep it protected from ice and snow during the winter months. Manager Schulz then confirmed that this is still in the early planning stages and no decisions have been made. Selectman Goslant had hoped that there would be more consolidation with Town/Village merger and less of a need for new buildings.
- XI. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED)**
- a. **Josh Jennings: Robinson Road.** Mr. Jennings sent a letter to the Select Board last month requesting that Robinson Road, currently a loop road, be dead ended so that there will a reduction in non-resident traffic. There have been problems over the years with cars speeding (despite the posted 25 MPH limit), garbage being dumped on the roadside, public urination, etc. He asked if the Board were still considering this request. Manager Schulz stated that he had discussed this matter with the appropriate department heads and now is looking into what the process would be for closing off the road. Mr. Jennings stated that this should be a quiet road but it is not. Selectman Gadbois asked if some times were worse than others. Mr. Jennings stated that the problems usually are on the weekends but there is no predicting. He added that logging trucks often use Robinson Road as a turnaround in order to get back on the freeway. Manager Schulz said that he would keep Mr. Jennings informed of any new developments.
- XII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NEEDED).** Motion by Selectman Donahue, seconded by Selectman Beal, to go into executive session, in accordance with 1 VSA 313 (a)(1), in order to discuss a personnel matter with Manager Schulz and Chief Dziobek present. **Motion passed 9-0-0.**

The Board went into executive session at 9:30 p.m.

Selectmen Doney and Wilson both left during the executive session.

Motion by Selectman Goslant, seconded by Selectman Donahue, to come out of executive session.
Motion passed 7-0-0.

The Board came out of executive session at 10:23 p.m. No action was taken.

- XIII. **ADJOURNMENT.** Motion by Selectman Beal, seconded by Selectman Gadbois, to adjourn. **Motion passed 7-0-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the Select Board meeting of October 28, 2014.